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CIA PUSHES FOR NICARAGUAN REBEL MERGER
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THE CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) HAS GIVEN AN ULTIMATUM TO TWO NICARAGUAN REBEL GROUPS IT FUNDS TO UNIFY THEIR FORCES BY THE END OF THIS WEEK; SENIOR COSTA RICAN SECURITY OFFICIALS SAID TODAY.

THE HONDURAN-BASED NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC FORCE (FDN) AND THE COSTA RICAN-BASED REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (ARDE) ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON CIA AID FOR THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST NICARAGUA'S LEFTIST SANDINIST GOVERNMENT BUT THEY ARE IDEOLOGICALLY DIVIDED.

THE SOURCES COULD NOT SAY WHAT ACTION THE CIA WOULD TAKE IF THE GROUPS FAILED TO AGREE NOR WOULD THEY SAY HOW THEY HAD OBTAINED INFORMATION ON THE ULTIMATUM.

ARDE GUERRILLA SOURCES SAID THE TWO MOVEMENTS WERE NOW CLOSE TO UNIFICATION BECAUSE OF THE U.S. PRESSURE.

ARDE LEADER EDEN PASTORA, A FORMER SANDINIST HERO WHO BECAME DISGRUNTLED WITH THE SANDINIST TIES WITH MOSCOW AND CUBA, HAS STRONGLY OPPOSED A UNIFICATION WITH THE FDN SINCE MOST OF ITS MEMBERS ARE EX-NATIONAL GUARDSMEN WHO FOUGHT FOR THE LATE NICARAGUAN DICTATOR ANASTASIO SOMOZA.‡

PASTORA WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN TOPPLING SOMOZA, BUT THE GUERRILLA SOURCES SAID ARDE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO SACRIFICE HIM TO MAINTAIN CIA FUNDING.

DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID THE CIA WAS ANXIOUS TO PRESENT A UNITED CONTRA FRONT -- THE REBELS ARE GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS CONTRAS -- TO CONGRESS SO IT WOULD APPROVE FURTHER COVERT AID.

CIA AID TO THE CONTRAS HAS RUN INTO CONTROVERSY ESPECIALLY OVER THE MINING OF NICARAGUAN PORTS WHICH HAS DAMAGED INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING.

THE TWO CONTRA FORCES HAVE SCORED LITTLE SUCCESS IN THEIR MORE THAN TWO-YEAR-OLD WAR AGAINST THE SANDINISTS AND HAVE CAPTURED NO MAJOR NICARAGUAN TOWNS.‡